IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend paragraph at page 6, beginning at line 4 as follows:

Biopolymer refers to a ~~syntheticmaterial~~ synthetic material used in a medical device or an *in vivo* or *in vitro* culture system that is intended to interact with a biological system. Biopolymers include, but are not limited to those taught in U.S. Pat. No. 5,514,378 (incorporated herein by reference). These biodegradable polymers include lactic acid polymers such as poly(L-lactic acid) (PLLA), poly(DL-lactic acid) (PLA), and poly(DL-lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA). The co-monomer (lactide:glycolide) ratios of the poly(DL-lactic-co-glycolic acid) are preferably between 100:0 and 50:50. Most preferably, the co-monomer ratios are between 85:15 (PLGA 85:15) and 50:50 (PLGA 50:50). Blends of PLLA with PLGA, preferably PLGA 85:15 and PLGA 50:50, are also used to prepare polymer membranes. Other representative polymers include polyorthoesters, and although not preferred for mechanical characteristics, polyanhydrides. The preferred biodegradable polymers are all degraded by hydrolysis. It is possible, however, to use other materials which degrade enzymatically. Reagents can be purchased from any of a number of commercial sources well known to those skilled in the art. Other polymers include polymers in the form of a hydrogel (typically absorbing up to about 90% by weight of water), and can optionally be ionically crosslinked with multivalent ions or polymers. Ionic crosslinking between soft segments can be used to hold a structure, which, when deformed, can be reformed by breaking the ionic crosslinks between the soft segments. The polymer may also be in the form of a gel in solvents other than water or aqueous solutions. In these polymers, the temporary shape can be fixed by hydrophilic interactions between soft segments. Hydrogels can be formed from polyethylene glycol, polyethylene oxide, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polyacrylates, poly (ethylene terephthalate), poly(vinyl acetate), and copolymers and blends thereof. Several polymeric segments, for example, acrylic acid, are elastomeric only when the polymer is hydrated and hydrogels are formed. Other polymeric segments, for example, methacrylic acid, are crystalline and capable of

melting even when the polymers are not hydrated. Either type of polymeric block can be used, depending on the desired application and conditions of use.